

1160 W. Orange Grove Ave., Arcadia, California 91006, U.S.A.

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OLD TIMERS  
JOHN ADAMS COMSTOCK  
ENRICO PIAZZA

ONE OF THE FIRST ENGLISH lepidopterists that I met here in Southern California was Enrico Piazza. He was collecting for Rothschild of the British Museum.

His actual name was Henry Place, but he went to Italy early, was a grand opera singer, and italianized his name for professional reasons. When his voice gave out, he commercialized his hobby, and came to Southern California. I visited him in a cottage which he had rented in San Diego, and admired the fine condition of the moths he was preparing for his customers.

Four species of California moths were named for him, namely:

*Tornos piazzata* Cassino & Swett.

*Cosymbia piazzaria* W. S. Wright

*Raphia piazzii* Hill.

*Myelois piazzella* Dyar.

He became ill, and started for England, but died in New York of cancer. Nothing was known of his effects, and his key collection was lost. His types had probably been sent to England.

I have not been able to locate essential facts concerning his background.

FORDYCE GRINNELL JR.

Fordyce was our most prominent and active lepidopterist when I arrived in Southern California. He was living in Pasadena with his parents. He was born June 17, 1882, in Pine Ridge, South Dakota, son of Dr. Fordyce Grinnell Jr. and Elizabeth Pratt Grinnell.

His brother was Joseph Grinnell Ph.D., a noted ornithologist and Faculty member of the University of California.

Fordyce was the founder of the Lorquin Natural History Society (now the Lorquin Entomological Society.) He was very active in collecting lepidoptera and had many local neophytes whose leadership he followed from about 1900 to 1914, when he entered Stanford University.

Read by John A. Comstock at the Association Banquet, evening of June 19, 1965.

He obtained his Bachelor degree in 1918, and went to Hawaii in the same year. He taught there until 1921 when he returned to Stanford.

Then, in 1922 he went to the Philippines where he served under the Bureau of Education of the Philippines, as a teacher.

He resigned in five months because, in his own words "he was unsuited to the official red tape and the classroom grind."

Thereafter he collected butterflies and beetles for the Bureau of Science in Manila, and the Hill Museum in Surry, England. This took him through various portions of the Philippine Islands until March of 1923, when he sailed for Australia.

He collected specimens in widely separated parts of the continent, interspersed with odd jobs to replenish his funds, until 1930, when he arrived in Cooktown, Australia. There he received a letter from his mother asking him to return home.

Mrs. Grinnell was then living in Sausalito, a widow, 80 years of age. Fordyce lived with her until he married Mary D. Walters on August 10, 1937. The ceremony occurred in Muir Woods.

I have no further record of his activities until he died in San Francisco, July 20, 1943.

He was author of the following species of butterflies:

*Anthocaris lanceolata australis*. *Cercyonis behrii*. *Vanessa atalanta* ab. *edwardsi*. *Vanessa carye* ab. *intermedia*. *Vanessa carye* ad. *letcheri*. *Strymon sylvinus desertorum*. *Plebejus emigdionis*. *Glaucopsyche lygdamus australis*. *Erynnis persius pernigra*. *Erynnis callidus* ♂ (nec. ♀) (syn. *lacustra callidus* ♀ *partim*) *Polites sabuleti tecumseh*.

#### WILLIAM SHERMAN WRIGHT

William S. Wright was an early staff member of our own San Diego Museum of Natural History. He served as Curator of Insects from 1922 to 1933, in addition to holding the important post of County Supervisor of Nature Study. He was a specialist in the *Geometridae*, and his own collection of insects, with his types, served as the nucleus of our present Entomological Division.

He was a profound student, a capable administrator, and a beloved teacher and friend.

A bronze plaque commemorating his generosity and helpfulness to our Museum may now be seen in the Entomological Laboratory.

He was born in Plaino, Illinois, April 23, 1866, and died in Laguna Beach, California, July 8, 1933.

I knew him well, and frequently collected with him, but, regretfully failed to make notes of the background of his history and family. There is little that I can find in the biographies.

He published several new species, and a number were named for him, but I have not had time to list them.

### WILLIAM GREENWOOD WRIGHT

Most of us have heard of the colorful pioneer lepidopterist of our early Southwest, but very few have seen his monument in the shape of his volume on "THE BUTTERFLIES OF THE WEST COAST".

The tragic reason is that "at the great fire in San Francisco, April 18, 1906, all the items going to make up this book . . . consisting of everything in the printers and the binders hands, and the finished books . . . all were destroyed."

I have one of these books, thanks to the fact that Wright's possession were given to the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco, including the few books that were in San Bernardino when the fire occurred. I was able to buy one of these volumes, and you can now take a peek at it.

W. G. Wright was born in 1830, and died in 1912. There may have been memorial notices of him, but I have failed to find only the one by Fordyce Grinnell in the Entomological News, Vol. 24, pp. 91-92, 1913. My notes contain mainly hearsay from people who knew him. He was a planing mill owner, whose hobby was butterfly collecting, and had had very little formal schooling. His book evidences that fact, but it also shows that he had enthusiasm and purpose. Knowing his handicaps, I consider that he did a remarkable piece of work.

There are many errors, to be sure, but others have pointed these out, as, for instance, Henry Skinner and Fordyce Grinnell in the Entomological News in Vol. 16, pp. 336-340, 1905.